REMARKS

Claims 17-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 17, 20 and 21 are amended and claims 33 and 34 are added. No new matter is added.

In paragraph 2 on page 2, the Office Action rejects claims 17-32 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that the terms "a width" and "the length" recited in claim 17 and "the height" recited in claim 20 are unclear, and that "the base" lacks antecedent basis. The rejection is rendered moot by the amendments to claims 17, 20 and 21. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In paragraph 4 on page 2, the Office rejects claims 17-19, 21-24 and 26-28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Anhalt et al. (Anhalt), U.S. Patent No. 4,431,244. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' claim 17 recites an electrical connector having a housing comprising a first housing element provided with at least a first connection portion that is either male or female; and a second housing element provided with at least one second connection portion that is either female or male, respectively, suitable for co-operating with the first connection portion; at least one of the first and second connection portions comprising a cylindrical wall extending parallel to an axis and defining a single cavity, said wall having a cross-section perpendicular to said axis, said wall having at least one elastically deformable tab made integrally therewith in the thickness of said wall, wherein the cavity comprises, in said cross-section, at least one side in the form of a straight line segment, said side having a length measured along said segment, wherein the tab extends along said side and has, in said cross-section, a width measured along said segment that is greater than half of the length of the side, and wherein the at least one tab is configured such that it deflects slightly outwardly relative to a rest position when first and second housing elements are assembled. Anhalt does not disclose all of these features.

Anhalt fails to disclose the at least one tab configured such that it deflects slightly outwardly relative to a rest position when first and second housing elements are assembled, as recited in claim 17. Anhalt discloses an electrical connector assembly comprising a plug connector 12 and a receptacle connector 14. The plug connector 12 comprises a molded plastic housing 16. The receptacle connector 14 comprises two latching levers 46 and 48 for cooperating with the housing 16 of the plug connector 12 (Figs. 1 and 2; col. 2, line 43 to col. 3, line 29). As shown in Fig. 2, the latching levers 46 and 48 do not deflect slightly outwardly relative to a rest position after connection of the plug connector 12 with the receptacle connector 14. Rather, ribs 60 of levers 46 and 48 abut or snap inwardly against the housing 16 of the plug connector 12 (col. 3, lines 38-46). However, there is no deflection of the latching levers 46 and 48 relative to a rest position after connection of the plug connector 12 with the receptacle connector 14. Thus, Anhalt fails to disclose or suggest the at least one tab configured such that it deflects slightly outwardly relative to a rest position when first and second housing elements are assembled, and therefore fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claim 17.

Because claims 18, 19, 21-24 and 26-28 incorporate the features of claim 17, Anhalt also fails to disclose or suggest the features of any of these claims for at least the foregoing reasons as well as for the additional features found therein. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In paragraph 5 on page 6, the Office Action rejects claims 17 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Mouissie, U.S. Patent No. 5,080,603. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Mouissie also fails to disclose the at least one tab configured such that it deflects slightly outwardly relative to a rest position when first and second housing elements are assembled, as recited in claim 17. Mouissie only teaches a cable connector 1 provided with a housing 2 with cantilevered latching members 3 for insertion into a receptacle connector 4.

When the cable connector 1 is inserted into the receptacle connector 4, detents or bosses 9 on the end of the latching members 3 are first pressed inwards by upright walls 7 and 8. When the cable connector 1 is fully seated in the receptacle connector 4, the bosses 9 spring back into recesses 10 and 11 to latch the connectors together (Figs. 1 and 3; col. 1, lines 13-30; and col. 2, line 63 to col. 3, line 3). The latching members 3, however, are not configured such that they deflect slightly outwardly relative to a rest position when first and second housing elements are assembled. Thus, Mouissie also fails to disclose or suggest all of the features of Applicants' claim 17.

Further, because claim 20 incorporates the features of claim 17, Mouissie also fails to disclose or suggest the features of claim 20 for at least the foregoing reasons as well as for the additional features found therein. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In paragraphs 7-9 on pages 8-10, the Office Action rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Anhalt in view of Mouissie; rejects claims 29 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Anhalt; and rejects claims 30 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Anhalt in view of Nishio et al. (Nishio), U.S. Patent No. 6,659,801. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 25, 29 and 32 incorporate the features of claim 17. As discussed above, Anhalt and Mouissie each fails to disclose or suggest all of the features of claim 17. Thus, Anhalt and Mouissie each fails to disclose or suggest the features of claims 25, 29 and 32 for at least the reasons discussed above as well as for the additional features found therein. Nishio does not overcome the deficiencies of Anhalt and Mouissie with respect to claim 17. As such, the combination cannot suggest the subject matter of claims 30 and 31, which depend from claim 17, for at least the reasons discussed above as well as for the additional features recited therein. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

New claims 33 and 34 are also patentable over the references of record.

Claim 33, in part, recites that the housing elements comprise an electrically conductive material so as to provide shielding for the housing. Anhalt does not disclose or suggest these features. Anhalt only discloses connector elements 12 and 14 having molded plastic housings (col. 2, lines 48 and 49). Mouissie only discloses a housing 2 of insulating material (col. 1, lines 14 and 15). Neither Anhalt nor Mouissie discloses or suggests providing an electrically conductive material as a shielding for the housing.

Nishio discloses a connector plug forming a USB connector having first and second tubular bodies 20 and 40 (col. 4, lines 12-14). The first tubular body 20 is composed of two members which include an upper member 21 and a lower member 30 (col. 5, lines 3-5). Securing strips 35 are provided in order to secure members 20 and 30 together by bending the strips 35 (col. 5, lines 41-45). However, one skilled in the art would have had no motivation to combine Anhalt and Nishio as they relate to different technical fields. Anhalt concerns plastic connectors (col. 1, lines 10-12; col. 2, lines 48 and 49), whereas Nishio concerns a multi contact connector with a shielding. Further, in Anhalt the connector elements are assembled by means of elastically deformable levers 46 and 48, whereas in Nishio the members 20 and 30 are assembled by bending strips 35. Because the technical fields of Anhalt and Nishio are different, and because the structures disclosed in Anhalt and Nishio differ substantially from each other, it would not have been obvious to combine Anhalt and Nishio.

Thus, claim 33 is patentable over the applied references.

Claim 34, in part, recites that the at least one tab presses against a wall of the other connection portion, the wall being substantially plane and parallel to the axis, when the housing elements are assembled. In Anhalt, on the other hand, the rib 60 has a latching shoulder 64 which extends in a plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the receptacle

connector (col. 3, lines 32-35). Thus, the rib 60 does not press against the wall of the housing 16 of the plug connector 12, the wall being substantially plane and parallel to the longitudinal axis. Mouissie and Nishio fail to account for these deficiencies. Thus, claim 34 is patentable over the applied references.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 17-34 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

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